

Smoke From The Chimneys



Long Beach Historical Society

Remembering the past to preserve our future

July 2015

President's Message

Mother Nature had us at a disadvantage on May 18, causing us to cancel the last meeting due to a problem with the air conditioner. There was no way we could meet in our facility without cooling, plus debris from the ceiling had fallen on the hall and dining room floors, insulation was also hanging down and water from above was leaking onto the floors. There was also a huge bulge in the overhead drywall that had not fallen YET but was due to drop at any moment. I'm happy to say that everything has now been repaired.

Some folks have said they liked the plans for the canceled meeting so we will try it for the July 20th meeting. If for some reason you missed reading about it in the last *Smoke From the Chimneys*, we are trying something new and in lieu of a speaker, we will use the time to look at and talk about the pictures, peruse our scrap books and check out the library room and the building in general. It is meant to be a relaxing time for socializing with others while observing the surroundings. New picture displays have been hung since the last

meeting. All of our calendar fronts have been framed and an Honor Wall for the Military has been started and the Historical Markers will be up on the walls also.

I had planned on using the September meeting for a city wide open house so possibly the July meeting can be a trial run. I'm sorry that Mother Nature has caused two consecutive meetings to be alike but if we enjoy ourselves and learn something new, it will be worth it. We must get new people in the building and pique their interest with some historical pictures which will lead to historical data and it would be nice if we all knew the data to pass on, or at least know where to find it. That may be in our library.

Thanks to Donald Dana for suggesting and spearheading the production of a Katrina marker that will be unveiled at the city ceremony on the anniversary of the wicked storm. The marker will tell about the devastation on one side and our comeback on the other side. Thanks to my husband Danny who spoke with Butch Oustalet who will be joining the society in purchasing the marker.

Check with Butch Oustalet Autoplex for your auto needs.

Thanks to Brenda Batey who suggested and volunteered to man a table at the multi-year LBHS reunion that I assist Eddie Ware with each year. She had a stack of Rosalie & Radishes and sold some of our calendars also. Eddie also put copies of the last edition of the newsletter on the table, and I saw some folks carrying them when they left. Our society's name was in the public and we could pick up some new members from the exposure.

The reunion was very successful and more than 40 members of the Class of 1965 came to celebrate their 50th Anniversary of graduating from Long Beach High School. It was also a milestone year for Brenda who graduated 45 years ago and for Danny and myself who graduated 55 years ago. Time flies when you're having fun!

Oh, and see you on July 20 at the meeting!

Sincerely,
Beth Hansen
President

**SMOKE FROM THE
CHIMNEYS
LONG BEACH, MS**

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**Long Beach
Historical Society**

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(South side of the central fire station on Klondyke RD)

Meetings will all be held on the THIRD Mondays except the Awards/Soup Luncheon will be held at the Methodist Church. all other at Historical Society Building, 645 Klondyke Rd.

2015 Meetings:

- **January 19, 11:00 AM (Awards/Soup Luncheon at the Methodist Church)**
- March 16
- May 18 - 6:00 pm
- **July 20 - 6:00 pm**
- September 21 - 6:00 pm
- November 16 - 6:00 pm

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Eddie Ware – Webmaster

Mission Statement

The Society's purpose is "to bring together those people interested in the history of the City of Long Beach and to coordinate their efforts in preserving and recording that history for future generations."

Long Beach Historical Society is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to the:

- Preservation and management of historic and cultural resources of Long Beach
- Provide educational opportunities for both its membership and the public

**Noteworthy Information on Our
Sister Cities**

Although Long Beach has had more names than the other cities on the coast, there are several others that have had at least one other name.

Our area was begun mostly by the French and many of our street and town names still reflect that in some way. Let's take a look at DeLisle. Bayou DeLisle was named before the town and came about because of the French cartographer that accompanied Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville on his 2nd trip to the Gulf around 1699-1700. The two charted and named several bayous and one was named for the famed cartographer, Compte Guillaume deLisle. Years later, when a settlement sprang up next to the bayou on land received in a grant given to Philippe Saucier, it was called LaRiviere des Loups, or Wolf River. By 1880, the English translation became Wolftown. However, the turning point was when the Post Office moved into the town which then took on the name of the cartographer, DeLisle in 1884.

The city of Shieldsborough, was named for Thomas Shields in 1789, when he received a land grant. Chartered as a city in 1818, the settlement was situated next to the Bay of St Louis, so named in 1699 in honor of Louis IX of France because it was discovered on his birthday. As Delisle, this city also took on the name of the adjacent body of water and became Bay St Louis in 1882, ironically, the same year that the name of our

own Scott's Station was changed to Long Beach.

A brief piece of information was picked up that the future Gulfport had been dubbed Cinderella City around the point in time that William Hardy was trying to build a railroad line from Jackson to Gulfport. This was prior to when Joseph T Jones and Spencer S Bullis became involved in that endeavour.

Instead of all roads leading to Rome, once upon a time, some of them around here led to the bayou. Bernard's Bayou, that is! Water is always a draw and this bayou lived up to the hype back in the early days of the coast. It was the "go to" place back in the day.

Although the bayou has always been called Bayou Bernard during the life of many coast folks, there is a possibility that it may have been changed, much as it was on the last batch of signs purchased by the county. Information was uncovered that said in the early days it was Bernard's Bayou, named for a free black man, Bernard Benoit, a blacksmith who owned a shop and forge on the banks of the bayou. Possibly his business was the first which would account for his name being tacked on. Mr. Benoit, a mulatto, was a native of Pass Christian who was one of many free blacks whose ancestors migrated from South Carolina and New Orleans and other places. It is thought that many of the free blacks of this time period were given their freedom upon the deaths of their owners. Some research suggests that the blacks and whites lived

quite nicely in harmony in “the Pass”.

In the early 1800's a small but popular Spanish-era community, called Buena Vista, sprang up on Bayou Bernard, north west of Biloxi and east of what would later become Gulfport.

After Miles and Sheldon Hand, brothers from New York, moved to Buena Vista in the 1840's the little town really took off. The brothers had seen ads placed by J J McCaughan that fueled their move. (John J McCaughan, the father of Harper, was once described as a one man Chamber of Commerce for the Coast.) The foundry that these men opened, produced much New Orleans iron grill and lace work that beautify the gorgeous balconies around the Crescent City. Many businesses were located in Buena Vista and most of them had long wharves jutting out into the water which made it easy for schooners and boats to approach for pickup and delivery.

Noteworthy is the fact that in honor of these brothers, the name of Buena Vista was eventually changed to Handsboro several years after they moved in and improved the place. Information on this town is a long story in itself as it was the ONLY business town on the coast. Possessing three newspapers, the town was actually known as the marketing and manufacturing center of the Mississippi Coast for twenty-five years before and after the Civil War. Eventually the brothers Hand each built large homes across from one another on the Bayou Bernard.

(Hmm, possibly this cut down on borrowing which was difficult if you had to get in a boat to run next door!) One source states the identical homes were said to be side by side, yet another said across the bayou from each other.

In the last newsletter, mention was made of the small community of Epico.. Although its name did not change in any way, it is being mentioned now just for informational purposes. A suburb of Handsboro, it was apparently at the north end of Courthouse Road. In other words, Epico was located in part of what is now Bayou View in Gulfport on a street leading directly into Henry Leinhardt's Industrial Park on Bayou Bernard. The little community seems to have been created out of necessity because its residents all worked in the mills in the park. Back in the boon docks in the 1910's and 20's may be an apt description and even some churches sprang up out there so the men and their families didn't have to journey to Handsboro for Sunday services. Frequent reports were in the newspaper about all of the activities happening at the Methodist Church.

It's hard to mention all of these little towns without also mentioning Mississippi City in the same breath. After all, it was the original county seat and site of the first courthouse. Political debates took place at the courthouse and there were even reports of a shootout or two mentioned at the location.

In the early part of the twentieth century Mississippi City had both public and private schools, as well as several churches and a post office.

Its name was also in contention in the Mississippi Legislature as a prospective site for the future University of Mississippi. As we all know, that

didn't happen although the extraordinary town did gain fame for being the site of a famous heavyweight fight between the popular boxers, John L Sullivan and Paddy Ryan in 1882. In 1888, the former president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, gave a unity speech in Mississippi City.

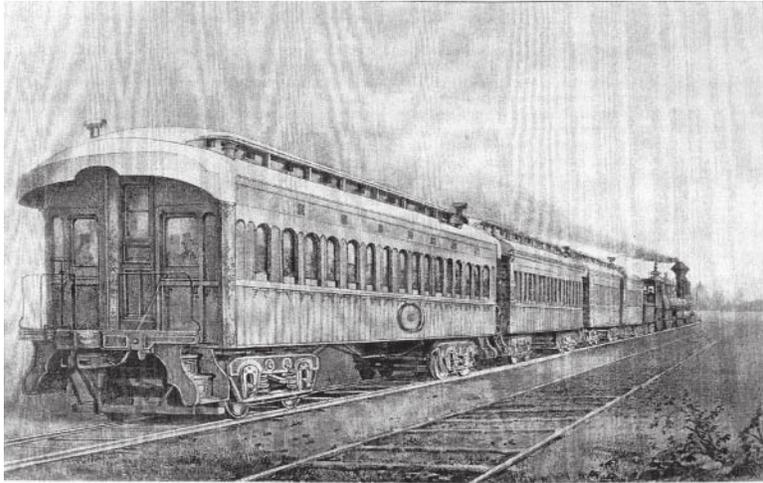
But, alas, the city did not become the port city as envisioned by its creators.



More On The Railroad

The coming of the railroad created development and growth in every state and south Mississippi was certainly no exception.

Due to our southernmost location on the water, the effects of tourism may have shown up first. We know that folks came here by schooner but the trip was even quicker by rail and too convenient to resist. Many of those from New Orleans who came to visit ended up buying property here on the coast. Some wanted the property for relaxation or 2nd homes while others derived income from it. This happened sometimes out of necessity when many young women found themselves the sole family support after the early demise of their husbands. These women became landlords very quickly. It was even said that some of the workers engaged in laying



New Orleans, Mobile and Texas Railroad built through coast in 1870.

the tracks liked it here so much that they stayed when the job was completed.

Local residents who had moved in before 1870 were probably very successful at persuading family and friends to move here after the trip by rail proved to be so much faster and convenient than those of other means. The cattle and furniture could also be shipped in by rail.

Before 1870, most of the saw mills along the entire coast were naturally built close to water such as at the mouths of rivers and streams. Pearlinton and Logtown were on the Pearl; Escatawpa and Moss Point on the Pascagoula river and here in our own

backyard, on the banks of Bayou Bernard. Our bayou was quite popular back in the day. The blossoming of young love as well as many a picnic and watermelon cuttings took place along its banks amid the logs being floated to the timber mills.

The railroad made a huge impact on the timber industry. Sawmills became larger and more plentiful and many of them had “dummy” rail lines out to the timber areas whereby they were able to move the timber to the railroad very quickly. During the first 15 years of the twentieth century Mississippi was in 3rd place in the nation behind Washington and Louisiana in lumber production. The long-leaf yellow pine from the southern half of our state accounted for most of the production. But being able to ship this lumber to other markets became a reality as eventually even exporting to foreign countries did.

Relative to Long Beach, of course, was the convenience of being able to ship our produce. There were also barrels to be made and ice to be housed and along with the profit of selling to far away markets, the whole process was a success. And of course, our long red radishes gave us a modicum of notoriety that other communities don't often achieve, even if we created the attention ourselves. Why not,



we shipped a huge amount of radishes, more than any other town, according to the newspapers and it was a splendid marketing tool before anyone was using the term.

Another point to consider is the convenience to all coastians. It was nice to come and go as we pleased on passenger trains and the commuter service that would be provided years later was also excellent. Coast students rode the train to St Stanislaus over in "the Bay" as did many other commuters going into New Orleans for meetings, school, and other reasons too. The Long Beach depot was a hotbed of activity when the commuters were picked up by their families in late afternoons.



Who remembers the Humming Bird buzzing through town? Ever watch the arm inside the mail car of a moving train snatch the mail bag off its perch along side the tracks? And what about the mail bag that was thrown off the train right onto the ground for the Post Office to retrieve? A few times, the mail bag being tossed off ended up under the wheels of the train causing Post Office employees to retrieve the pieces. It was also fun if one had a relative employed by L&N who was hanging out on the caboose, in caboose days, just waiting to answer the cry "blow the whistle, blow the whistle!"

All good things come to an end and as each new invention comes along, the previous goes by the wayside. By the 1940's and '50's many folks were using their own private transportation and filling their car windows with decals of each state they passed through while vacationing. Others took to the skies for some really fast travel, and with the heyday of the railroad long passed, passenger service was discontinued in the late 1960's. The Humming Bird had a long run through our area, from 1947 until 1969.





Condolences

Our deepest sympathy is offered to the families and friends of Geraldine Fennell Hammons, Salvador Guiffria, Linda Sigworth, Mary Lois Setzer, Lester Clifford Archer, Hazel Erhard, Sherry Skinner, Robert Farris, Kenneth J O'Brien, Sr, Marie Johnston, Matthew Weede, Wayne May, Glendeen Lowe, who was 4 days shy of being 101 and Calla "Toni" Alexander who was 102 years old!!!!

Family Stories

We hope you enjoyed reading about Eddie Ware's family in the last edition of Smoke from the Chimneys. We also hope that you have been inspired to write down a few tidbits about your own family and submit to us to keep on file here at the Historical Society.

Annual Cemetery Tour

We feel that our cemetery tour last year was a success and is something that we want to continue, as it is such a historical learning experience. Although it was our second one, the two were not consecutive and since we're relatively new to this old activity, there is more to be learned. Plans will commence very soon for the next one in October and we'd welcome your input so if you have any thoughts or ideas to pass on to us regarding this, please feel free to give them to us.

Surely there are many of us who have not been on a cemetery tour so we're offering some advance information for you that you may want to pass on to others. Some folks last year brought in groups of children, which is quite all right but they may have been under the impression that it was a kiddy type evening. It's really for everyone and possibly the adults may enjoy this more than the children.



Other groups on the coast have been involved with cemetery tours for many years now, probably the longest running tour is in "the Bay". It's quite successful after more than 25 years. Their oldest grave dates back to 1815 so they're somewhat ahead in that respect.

Besides our society, tours are also being conducted by Pass Christian, Biloxi and Pascagoula, which seems to be a newcomer also, beginning in 2011 and they were surprised to see 200 people on the evening of their first tour. Since then they have had as many as 1200 folks to show up. One year they also used a theme and highlighted departed that had been engaged in the shipbuilding industry during their lives.

Most of these tours are usually run by historical societies and are very similar. Some lead the groups and others let the guests roam freely from place to place. Some of the societies invite other groups to help them and the tours are all billed as being free but donations are accepted and are used for cemetery restoration and tombstone repair. This is indeed a very worthy cause since tombstones do deteriorate as time goes by. A very sad fact and if all descendants have moved away or have also passed on there are no family members to keep these tombstones up. It then becomes the responsibility of others to take care of the departed. It's a very worthy cause

In comparison to Bay St Louis having graves dating from 1815, Long Beach did not have a public cemetery so on our tour one won't find a tombstone older than 1901 at which time Charles Littlepage was interred, the first in our new cemetery.

We received positive feedback from several folks last year who all seem to have enjoyed the people that were highlighted. We chose several people that we thought everyone would know but there are definitely many other noteworthy individuals that had very interesting lives that we'd all like to hear about whether we knew them or not.

The date and time for the tour will be announced in the October edition of Smoke from the Chimneys. Again, please pass on your input and volunteer to help make the tour a success.

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A northbound freight at Long Beach behind 621 in April 1968